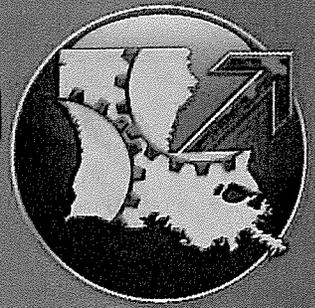




# LA GEAR UPdate



Dear Friends:

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated most of southeast Louisiana, and the resulting levee breaches flooded and crippled the City of New Orleans. As if that were not enough, less than one month later, Hurricane Rita battered the western part of the state. While the immediate impact of Katrina and Rita was widely reported in the media, Louisiana continues to struggle with the storms' aftermath—not just in New Orleans—but throughout the entire state.

Due to the successive blows of Katrina and Rita, Louisiana is a significantly altered place—environmentally, politically, demographically, economically, and psychologically. Louisiana GEAR UP has been operating within this vastly altered context. Yet, even now, especially now—with the images of the Superdome still fresh in our memories—we realize anew the magnitude of our mission. Never before have we been presented with a greater challenge to elevate the academic achievement of low-income students; yet never before have we been so eager, even optimistic, as we embrace the task.

Sincerely,

Kerry Davidson  
LA GEAR UP Project Director

# Explorers Clubs

Supporting the goals of the Summer Learning camps, Explorers Clubs, an academic year leadership opportunity for students, successfully enable students to continue and extend their summer learning and leadership development.

## Explorers Club State Conference

The second annual Explorers Club State Conference was held in April 2006. Student officers of the Explorers Clubs presented the results of their work in the areas of academics, behavior and leadership, college preparation and career exploration, and service to school and community. At the conference, students detailed their experiences visiting colleges in and out of Louisiana and talked about applying for Rewards for Success scholarships. As a staff, we returned to Baton Rouge excited, believing that the school-based Explorers Clubs may just be LA GEAR UP's single most potent transforming influence.



Students, teachers, and parents at the Explorers Club State Conference at Louisiana Tech in Ruston, LA.



# Summer Academic-Year Learning Projects Provide a Respite from the State Turmoil

Together, the Summer Learning Camps and Explorers Clubs initiatives grow in popularity among students, parents, and educators. We had more applications for summer camp this year, 2006, than ever before.



## 2006 Summer Camps

### **Louisiana Tech Explorers Camp** (first-time campers only)

For students who like designing new things. They'll love the engineering exploration where engineering principles are used to build a new structure. Campers attending the La Tech Camp will visit a planetarium and explore the Experiment Gallery. A field trip takes campers to Shreveport's SciPort Discovery Center and IMAX Theater!

### **Grambling State University**

An opportunity to explore Louisiana's coastal waterways with real scientists. The Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium was formed in 1979 to coordinate and stimulate Louisiana's activities in marine research and education. Camp participants visit this facility and conduct their own scientific investigations in this uniquely Louisiana laboratory!

### **University of Louisiana-Monroe**

CSI crossed with Fear Factor as campers detect a predator's last victim in a Biology Exploration and discover what's lurking in the drinking water in an Aquatic Toxicology Exploration. Campers learn to use a hand-held GPS device in a Geosciences Exploration and investigate technology in a Computer Science Exploration.

# LA GEAR UP is Also...

- ▶ **Supervising university-led professional development projects in math, science, and literacy**
- ▶ **Furthering excitement and interest in teaching and learning science through partnership with LIGO, the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory Science Education Center**
- ▶ **Providing embedded Professional Development in the form of ongoing consultation in the areas of Positive Behavior Support (a proactive alternative for dealing with school and classroom behavior)**
- ▶ **Promoting healthier lives through nutrition and physical activity through "LA Health," a partnership with the Pennington Biomedical Research Center and the Louisiana Department of Education**

